United Nations S/2016/1004

Security Council

Distr.: General
30 November 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 29 November 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you a letter dated 29 November 2016 from Anas Abdah, President of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (see annex).

I would be grateful if you could have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Abdallah Y. **Al-Mouallimi**
Permanent Representative

16-21110 (E) 021216

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 29 November 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

It is with great urgency that I write to you on behalf of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces and the Syrian people to highlight the desperate humanitarian situation in Aleppo as the regime and its allies continue their relentless and indiscriminate bombardment of the city and countryside of Aleppo.

The liberated area of the city of Aleppo, home to more than 300,000 civilians, has been under de facto siege since August 2016 and under a devastating assault since 15 November 2016 by the Assad regime and its allies, systematically targeting civilians and vital civilian infrastructure, particularly medical facilities and schools. As I write to you, every hospital in Aleppo has gone out of service, leaving hundreds of people injured by the indiscriminate bombardment and at risk of losing their lives because of a complete lack of medical care. Actually, Assad regime and his allies are turning the liberated areas of the city of Aleppo into a virtual coffin, given that official food stocks are running out and civilians are under siege. Moreover, reports from the ground indicate that banned and indiscriminate weapons, including cluster bombs, barrel bombs and thermobaric bombs, have been used by the regime and its allies in their barbaric bombardments of residential areas in Aleppo.

This outrageous escalation of the situation in Aleppo has killed more than 670 people, 40 per cent of them children; caused the displacement of more than 3,000 families; destroyed 11 hospitals and medical centres; and involved the use of chlorine gas four times, which constitutes a further crime against humanity and a war crime in the regime's long and bloody record of barbarity. Moreover, it runs in the face of all relevant international resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 2118 (2013) and 2235 (2015), concerning the use of indiscriminate weapons in Syria, and Council resolutions 2254 (2015) and 2268 (2016), endorsing the cessation of hostilities and humanitarian access agreement.

The National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces believes that the Assad regime can only persist in this criminality as long as it enjoys the impunity it has enjoyed so far as a result of international inaction, let alone the active support of its allies, particularly Russia. As a pioneer of human rights and international peace and security in the world, the United Nations has the responsibility to translate words into action, to protect the civilians in Aleppo and to make sure that the regime's criminality against its own people no longer goes without consequences.

Therefore, the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces hereby demands that the United Nations, as the main international sponsor of the political process in Syria, take immediate and decisive actions to ensure the protection of the civilians in Aleppo by: (a) stopping this barbaric attack on the civilians in Aleppo by compelling the Assad regime to abide by the terms of a cessation of hostilities; (b) allowing unfettered and immediate humanitarian access and medical aid to the city; (c) holding to account those responsible for these crimes; and (d) preventing the repetition of such gross violations. It is hardly an

exaggeration to say that the very credibility of the international system is at stake here. Failing to act to uphold the values and principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and all relevant resolutions would shake people's faith in the international system in Syria, the region and beyond.

We are counting on the United Nations to spare no effort to ensure that the suffering of the Syrian people is brought to an end and that their just demands of freedom, dignity and justice are finally fulfilled.

(*Signed*) Anas **Abdah**
President
National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces